They say Disney World is the most magical place on earth. It’s where dreams come true and where one will always feel like a child at heart. For English teacher Mrs. Morris, the magic of the park is something that will remain with her forever.

Mrs. Morris currently teaches English classes for both sophomores and juniors at Catholic, but during the summer of 1972, she had the opportunity to work at Disney World.

While attending Stetson University, a small Baptist school near Daytona Beach, Morris shared an apartment with three other girls, located on the top floor of a house. Together, they set off for Disney World and managed to get positions in the opening day parade.

Following the parade, Morris and her friends received free tickets, which gave them access to every attraction, and soon secured permanent summer jobs in the park.

“What I really wanted to be was a tour guide, but I didn’t get that job. Instead I started working in retail, at Mickey’s Mart in Tomorrow Land,” Morris said.

Don’t let the magical façade fool you, though. Working at Disney World was still tough work. Mrs. Morris never signed up for a specific shift, but instead volunteered to work whenever she was needed. This resulted in an extremely hectic schedule, something Mrs. Morris has tried to avoid ever since that summer.

Regardless of these busy days, the park became one of the places Mrs. Morris found herself feeling the happiest.

“We all look like a bunch of hippies! It was fun though,” Morris said as she slowly flipped through some old photos.

Another privilege of working at the park, according to Mrs. Morris, was the people she was surrounded by each day. She worked alongside employees just around her age and grew close to many as the summer drew to a close.

“The best part of working there? It was all young people! We always had to be polite and smiling, and when you’re smiling you start to feel better. It was fun and entertaining, but it was a serious business. They didn’t overlook anything,” Morris said.

One of the most intriguing features of Disney World, however, lies beneath the surface. Directly under the park, employees gathered each day to eat in the cafeteria, change into their uniforms, and receive nametags.

“Underneath the park it’s like a whole new city,” Morris said.

Of course, Mrs. Morris couldn’t help but break a few rules during her summer in Disney World. As a souvenir, she stole her nametag and had a bit of an adventure with some friends.

“We weren’t supposed to go out into the park while in our costumes, but one morning before the park had opened we came up through the tunnels and sat by the front gates, just to see the first people come in. There were so many!” Morris said.

After spending her entire summer working in Disney World, Mrs. Morris returned to school but still continued to work in the park on weekends. She had grown extremely close to her roommates and learned valuable lessons that she would soon apply to her career as a teacher.

“It was great experience,” Morris said. “I learned to keep things fun, and discover the magic in small things. I’m looking forward to taking my grandkids back there someday.”